

Request for Proposals – Montana Invasive Species Programs Assessment

Project Overview

Missoula County (“County”), in association with the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council (“Council”), seeks an experienced natural resource consultant to conduct an independent statewide assessment of invasive species program management in Montana. The assessment will allow the Council to better focus its efforts, fill regulatory and management gaps and better fulfill its purpose in Montana. The selected consultant will work with both the County and the Council to gather the information necessary for the independent assessment.

Project Background

On December 4, 2014, Montana Governor, Steve Bullock, signed Executive Order No. 13-2014, establishing the Montana Invasive Species Advisory Council. The purpose of the Council is to advise the Governor on a science-based, comprehensive program to identify, prevent, eliminate, reduce and mitigate the impacts of invasive species in Montana.

The Council is composed of 21 members, appointed by the Governor from the following categories: Tribal Government Representative; County Weed District Representative; Montana State University Extension Representative; Montana Conservation District Representative; Conservation Organization Representative; Private Landowner; Natural Resource Group; Private Industry; MT Department of Natural Resources Representative; MT AIS Coordinator (MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks); MT Noxious Weed Coordinator (MT Department of Agriculture); MT Department of Transportation Representative; Hydropower Utility; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service; U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service; U.S. National Park Service; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

The Council has identified three priorities to accomplish in the next two years:

1. Conduct an independent assessment of Montana's invasive species programs;
2. Sponsor a Montana Invasive Species Summit in February/March of 2016 to engage Montana's agriculture and natural resource communities in a discussion of the results of the independent assessment; and
3. Develop a Montana Invasive Species Strategic Plan, using the assessment and the information gathered at the summit, which will serve as a prioritized roadmap for invasive species in Montana.

The Council is ready to move forward with the first priority: the Montana Invasive Species Program Assessment. The purpose of these assessments is to provide needed information for the future development of a comprehensive management plan for invasive species in Montana. Currently, there are individual invasive programs for aquatic invasive species, terrestrial plants and animals, and pests. These programs are run independently, but the state is looking to create efficiencies, improve coordination among agencies, and make overall improvements to how the state manages invasive species.

Scope of Services

The County seeks a consultant with significant experience in the design and implementation of

invasive species program assessments. The assessment must contain, but is not limited to, the following tasks:

Task 1: Assessment and gap analysis for programmatic operations of aquatic invasives, terrestrial invasives (includes plants & animals); and invasive pests in regards to coordination, prevention, detection, data collection and distribution, rapid response and management of invasive species. Assessment will include identifying gaps, redundancies, strengths/weaknesses, threats, and opportunities.

DELIVERABLE: Findings report to include recommendations as well as alternatives for management approaches, tactics, and implementation strategies.

Task 2: Review current laws and provide recommendations for integrating and/or merging laws and/or recommendations for new legislation.

DELIVERABLE: Findings report to include gaps in statutory authority and suggestions for prioritizing policy issues that state agencies should consider when developing new policies and management plans.

Task 3: Develop criteria for prioritization of invasive species management based on:

- Legal authorities;
- Funding (enable financial supporters of invasive species projects to allocate dollars to highest priority areas for combating invasive species and to fill gaps in management);
- Distribution;
- Feasibility;
- Threat (ecological, economic, ect.).

DELIVERABLE: Criteria and guidance for prioritizing invasive species.

Resources provided may include existing and past management plans, site visits, program reports, internal assessments, and access to multiple stakeholders including agency staff, landowners, NGOs, etc.

Pre-submission Questions

Any questions about this RFP must be addressed in writing to Bryce Christiaens, Chair, MT Invasive Species Advisory Council, Bryce@missoulaeduplace.org on or before 5:00 PM, 07/10/2015. Questions must include:

1. Company name and address;
2. Contact information, including name, email address, and telephone number.
3. Clear reference to the section and item in question.

The County will provide a formal written addendum by 5:00pm, 07/15/2015 to questions received by the deadline. Any addendum will be posted on the Council's website, <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cadd/MISAC>. An Acknowledgment of Addendum must accompany the RFP response.

Amount Budgeted for Project
\$30,000 to \$40,000

Interim Report Dates
10/01/2015 and 12/01/15

Desired Project Completion Date
01/15/2016

RFP Requirements

The following information must be submitted in the project proposal:

- a. Organization information. Details about the firm including: form or organization, contact information, location of offices, and the names of principals, officers, and directors.
- b. Project proposal. A narrative addressing the scope of work and time line for the assessment.
- c. Background. A description of the firm's background in conducting invasive species program assessments
- d. Key personnel. The experience and qualifications of staff proposed to be assigned to the project.
- e. Availability. A brief statement of the availability of key personnel to be assigned to the project.
- f. Project list. List of similar/relevant projects completed by the firm.
- g. Design examples. Examples of conceptual layouts from other completed invasive species assessments
- h. Project budget. An overall budget with estimated cost breakdowns for project components or phases.
- i. References. Names and telephone numbers of three (3) references about the firm's past performance, preferably on similar projects.

RFP Due Date and Submittal Address

Responses to this RFP are due by 5:00PM, 07/24/2015 and should be mailed to:

Bryce Christiaens, Chair, MT Invasive Species Advisory Council
2825 Santa Fe Court
Missoula, MT 59808

The submittal package should be marked "Montana Invasive Species Program Assessment" and contain two (2) paper copies and one (1) digital copy.

RFP Timeline Summary

Release Date: 07/06/2015

Pre-submission questions due: 07/10/2015

Addendum response to question posted by: 07/15/2015

RFP Due Date: 07/24/2015

Contract Awarded by: 07/31/2015

Project Completion Date: 01/15/2016

Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

The contract will be awarded to the consultant whose qualifications, experience, and cost proposal are deemed most advantageous to Council. The following criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals:

- 1) Ability of the firm to prepare a complete and independent assessment that addresses all items in the Request for Proposals.
- 2) Experience of the firm and project staff on similar projects.
- 3) Ability of the firm to meet the Council's timeline for the project.
- 4) Feedback from references.
- 5) Cost proposal.

The evaluation team may interview finalists in person or over the phone. Missoula County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

